

14 FAM 760

DIPLOMATIC POST OFFICE (DPO)

(CT:LOG-139; 11-05-2012)
(Office of Origin: A/LM)

14 FAM 761 POLICY FOR DIPLOMATIC POST OFFICES

(CT:LOG-91; 04-04-2011)

- a. 39 U.S.C. 413 authorizes the United States Postal Service (USPS) to establish branch U.S. Post Offices at U.S. diplomatic missions abroad.
- b. The Director of A/LM/PMP/DPM provides DPO policy and procedural guidance to DPOs and establishes DPO service based on the needs of the International Cooperative Administrative Support Services (ICASS) community at U.S. diplomatic missions abroad.

14 FAM 761.1 What Is a Diplomatic Post Office (DPO)?

(CT:LOG-139; 11-05-2012)

- a. A diplomatic post office is a postal facility that operates at one of the Department's missions abroad as a branch post office of the USPS. All DPO ZIP codes are published on the DPM [Web site](#).
- b. There are two categories of diplomatic post offices, original and converted.

14 FAM 761.1-1 Original DPO

(CT:LOG-91; 04-04-2011)

- a. The first DPO category was established consistent with Article 27 of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (which requires states to "permit and protect" free communication of missions with their sending states), and 39 U.S.C. 413, which provides authority for the Department and USPS to enter into an agreement to establish new branch post offices at U.S. diplomatic missions in locations abroad where military branch post offices have not been established pursuant to 39 U.S.C. 406.
- b. DPM requires signed international agreements with all required host-nation offices (i.e. foreign ministry, host foreign postal administration (FPA), and customs as applicable) prior to formal establishment of diplomatic postal activities. A DPO activity established in a host country pursuant to such international agreements may service other postal activities and other

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authorized personnel assigned outside the host country only if the agreement does not prohibit such service.

14 FAM 761.1-2 Converted DPO

(CT:LOG-91; 04-04-2011)

- a. The second DPO category covers those military branch post offices initially established pursuant to 39 U.S.C. 406, and for which managerial transfer to the Department occurs as a result of the agreement between the Department and DOD.
- b. DPOs that were created under 39 U.S.C. 406, and subsequently transferred to Department control, will continue to operate with minimal service limitations unless dictated locally.

14 FAM 761.2 How Do I Get a Diplomatic Post Office (DPO) at My Post?

(CT:LOG-91; 04-04-2011)

- a. Post must conduct a cost analysis (with assistance from DPM) and determine if there is support and adequate ICASS resources to establish permanent DPO service. Post will be responsible for management of all local DPO functions and must conform to established USPS and Department policies and procedures.
- b. Initiate requests to establish DPO service to the Director of A/LM/PMP/DPM. Post requests must include:
 - (1) All applicable host-nation signed agreements listed in 14 FAM 761.1-1, paragraph b;
 - (2) Number of personnel supported by agency;
 - (3) Airline that the post will use for return mail;
 - (4) Name of local ground handling company;
 - (5) Location of the local mail staging warehouse; and
 - (6) Name of postal officer.

NOTE: A/LM/PMP/DPM must be consulted before any additional downstream posts are added to the hub DPO so that a serviced downstream post does not become burdensome to the DPO activity in the hub-host mission. If approved by DPM, onward shipping is paid by the receiving post.

14 FAM 761.3 Who May Use the Diplomatic Post Office (DPO)?

(CT:LOG-91; 04-04-2011)

- a. The Department determines access to the DPO under the same rules as diplomatic pouch. In general, U.S. citizen employees and certain authorized contractors may use the diplomatic post office (14 FAM 724.2, paragraph b and 14 FAM 724.2, paragraph c). At the post level, the sponsoring agency must subscribe to ICASS Basic Package and Mail and Messenger Services (6 FAH-5 H-352).
- b. U.S. Government contractors, private commercial firms, private U.S. citizens abroad, locally employed staff (LE staff), and private foreign citizens are normally prohibited from using the DPO. Post management must request exceptions from A/LM/PMP/DPM on a case-by-case basis, including justification for the request.
- c. Schools abroad:
 - (1) Schools abroad are not authorized use of DPO for shipment of official bulk supplies such as books and equipment. U.S. Government-sponsored schools are authorized to use the Despatch Agency for shipment of bulk materials (see 14 FAM 315.1);
 - (2) Employees of U.S. Government-sponsored schools are not authorized to use the DPO; and
 - (3) Emergency orders for books and educational materials, short-falls, testing materials, educational pamphlets and periodicals, video cassettes, CDs, transcripts, correspondence and similar materials other than bulk orders, may be sent via DPO when approved in advance by DPM and the Office of Overseas Schools (A/OPR/OS). Every attempt to use the Despatch Agency must be made before using the DPO.

14 FAM 761.4 What Items May or May Not Be Transported by the Diplomatic Post Office (DPO)?

(CT:LOG-91; 04-04-2011)

- a. Mailing restrictions vary by ZIP code and can be found in the USPS Postal Bulletin.
- b. USPS Publication 52, "Hazardous, Restricted, and Perishable Mail," lists information about mailable and nonmailable items.
- c. When in doubt, contact the DPO-Answerperson at DPO-Answerperson@state.gov.

14 FAM 761.4-1 Official Mail in the DPO

(CT:LOG-59; 05-06-2009)

As the Department provides diplomatic pouch service for official mail to all posts, DPO should only be used for personal mail. DPO mail is not afforded the same detailed level of tracking as ILMS-pouched items and does not always receive inspections-free passage under the Vienna Convention.

14 FAM 761.4-2 Official Supplies in the DPO

(CT:LOG-91; 04-04-2011)

The DPO cannot be used to transport official bulk supplies. Official unclassified bulk supplies for posts must be transported through the Department's U.S. Despatch Agency, international mail, or via commercial transportation companies. Limited amounts of official unclassified supplies may be sent through the diplomatic pouch; see 14 FAM 723.1, paragraph b. Official classified supplies must be sent through the classified diplomatic pouch.

14 FAM 761.4-3 Personal Mail in the DPO

(CT:LOG-139; 11-05-2012)

- a. Individuals and agencies authorized DPO privileges may not mail through a DPO any item(s) intended for resale. This resale prohibition applies whether sale is to authorized DPO users or not, and regardless of the beneficiary of the proceeds, e.g., charitable organizations or schools.
- b. All return mail from a DPO is subject to U.S. customs inspection. For information on U.S. customs duties, see the Customs and Border Protection Web site.
- c. Mail received at original DPO locations is exempt from local customs inspection under Article 27 of the Vienna Convention. Mail received at converted DPO locations is not necessarily exempt from local customs inspection.
- d. Intra/inter theater delivery service (IDS) *is not* authorized from DPO locations.

14 FAM 761.4-4 Private Property in the DPO

(CT:LOG-91; 04-04-2011)

- a. Individuals and agencies authorized DPO privileges may not mail through a DPO any private property (household effects or unaccompanied baggage) to a domestic address or another post abroad. Such mailing of household goods to oneself to circumvent the limit on household goods is an abuse of the agreement that grants Department employees the privilege of using the DPO for personal mail. Employees who abuse the DPO must reimburse the Department for transportation costs of items mailed via the DPO (31 U.S.C.

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9701) and risk the loss of DPO privileges.

- b. Authorized personnel may use the diplomatic post office (DPO) to ship or receive limited quantities of unprohibited foodstuffs, not to exceed the bulk shipment limit; see 14 FAM 742.4-2, paragraph c.

14 FAM 762 FUNDING FOR DIPLOMATIC POST OFFICES

(CT:LOG-59; 05-06-2009)

- a. As an extension of the USPS abroad, diplomatic post offices (DPOs) function as authorized USPS branch offices. For mail to post, the customer pays the USPS domestic rate from the originating address to the respective U.S. gateway ZIP code (340XX, 96XXX, 09XXX). For mail from post, the customer pays the USPS domestic rate from the U.S. gateway to the final destination in the United States and its territories.
- b. A/LM/PMP/DPM pays for all mail transportation costs from the U.S. gateway to the airport servicing the post. Fees incurred to transport the mail from/to the airport to/from post are borne by post. Designated DPOs are required to reimburse DPM for air transportation fees for their return mail.
- c. The Department, through its foreign missions, embassies, and consulates, intends that no additional administrative burden or costs outside the scope of the agreement will be incurred by DOD or USPS for mail delivery or routing. USPS or DPM may terminate any post DPO in the event of noncompliance.

14 FAM 763 RESPONSIBILITY FOR DIPLOMATIC POST OFFICES

14 FAM 763.1 Department's Official Mail Manager (OMM)

(CT:LOG-91; 04-04-2011)

In addition to the official mail manager (OMM) duties described in 14 FAM 714.2, the Director of A/LM/PMP/DPM develops the Department's position on official and domestic postal matters to be used in negotiations with the USPS and Department of Defense Military Postal Service Agency (DOD/MPSA) for changes pertaining to the memorandums of agreement establishing diplomatic post offices.

14 FAM 763.2 Diplomatic Post Office (DPO) Personnel at Post

(CT:LOG-91; 04-04-2011)

- a. The post official mail manager (see 14 FAM 737.1, paragraph b) is responsible for the overall management and oversight of DPO operations. This includes, but is not limited to, ensuring that all personnel assigned to the DPO are properly trained to perform all required tasks involved in the operation of the DPO in accordance with pertinent Department and USPS regulations.
- b. The DPO postal officer must be a direct-hire, SECRET-cleared U.S. citizen employee. The DPO postal officer is responsible for the operation, safety, security, accountability, and efficiency of Diplomatic Post Offices at posts with those facilities. The DPO postal officer conducts inspections and ensures mail is delivered in a timely and efficient manner.
- c. The DPO mail supervisor and the DPO mail clerks may be locally employed staff, responsible for the day-to-day operations of Diplomatic Post Offices at posts with those facilities. The DPO supervisor and DPO clerk ensure mail is delivered in a timely and efficient manner.

14 FAM 764 DIPLOMATIC POST OFFICE FACILITIES

(CT:LOG-91; 04-04-2011)

For a description of physical and security standards for diplomatic post office facilities, contact dpo-answerperson@state.gov.

14 FAM 765 SERVICES OF DIPLOMATIC POST OFFICES

(CT:LOG-91; 04-04-2011)

- a. All DPOs must make every effort to furnish quality mail service for all mail transiting DPOs.
- b. Services provided by DPOs may include but are not limited to:
 - Certified Mail
 - Insured Mail
 - Certificate of Mailing
 - Return Receipt
 - Return Receipt for Merchandise

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- c. Send a request to dpo-answerperson@state.gov for instructions that govern how these services are provided, internal controls, and record-keeping.

14 FAM 766 PROCEDURES FOR DIPLOMATIC POST OFFICES

(CT:LOG-91; 04-04-2011)

Contact dpo-answerperson@state.gov for procedures on how to manage and operate a diplomatic post office.

14 FAM 767 THROUGH 769 UNASSIGNED